

International comparisons of educational attainment, by age

The percentage of the population completing secondary and higher education in the United States and other highly industrialized countries indicates the skill level of the U.S. work force as compared to the work force of our nation's economic competitors. In addition, contrasting the educational attainment of the general population to the attainment of younger aged cohorts provides a means of comparing past and recent progress in rates of completion of high school or college.

- The educational attainment of the U.S. population in 1994 was high compared to that of other large industrialized countries. A similar or higher percentage of 25- to 64-year-olds in the United States had completed secondary and higher education compared to their counterparts in Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, or Canada.
- In 1994, 25- to 34-year-olds in Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and Canada had completed secondary education at rates similar to their counterparts in the United States.
- Females aged 25–34 in the United States were much more likely to complete higher education than females and males in the same age group in other large industrialized countries (with the exception of males aged 25–34 in Japan).
- Males aged 25–34 in Japan were much more likely to complete higher education than males of the same age group in the other large industrialized countries. Males aged 25–34 in the United States ranked second.

Percentage of the population in large industrialized countries who had completed secondary and higher education, by age, sex, and country: 1994

Country	25–64 years old		25–34 years old					
	Total		Total		Male		Female	
	Secondary	Higher	Secondary	Higher	Secondary	Higher	Secondary	Higher
	education ¹	education	education ¹	education	education ¹	education	education ¹	education
Canada	74.1	16.9	82.3	18.4	80.6	18.0	84.0	18.9
France ²	67.1	9.2	84.4	11.6	86.4	11.9	82.3	11.3
Germany	84.0	12.6	89.6	11.9	91.6	12.7	87.5	11.0
Italy	33.2	7.5	47.3	7.9	45.6	7.7	49.0	8.1
Japan ³	69.7	13.3	90.6	22.9	89.3	34.2	91.8	11.5
United Kingdom	74.5	11.7	86.1	13.7	87.3	15.7	84.9	11.7
United States	85.1	24.4	86.4	23.4	85.2	23.4	87.5	23.5

¹ Includes individuals who have at least completed secondary education.

² France's definitions of ISCED levels were changed so that they are more similar to EUROSTAT definitions and are easier to compare to the definitions of other countries. As a result, data for 1994 are not directly comparable with data for other years.

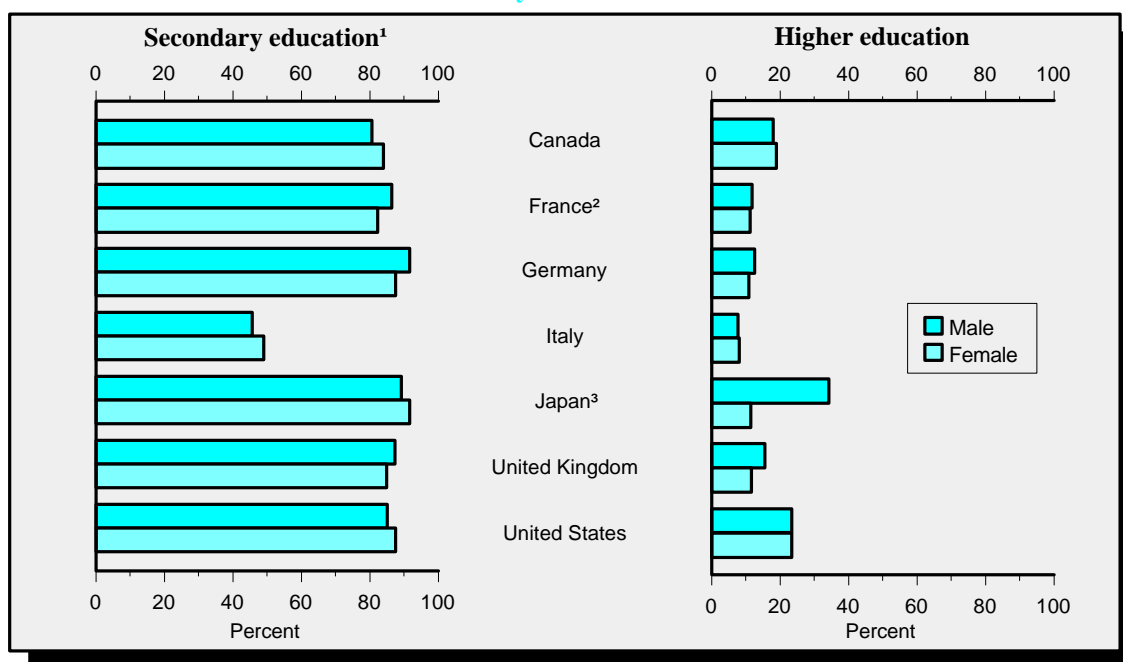
³ Data are for 1989.

NOTE: In the United States, completing secondary education is defined as graduating from high school or earning a GED; completing higher education is defined as earning a bachelor's degree or higher.

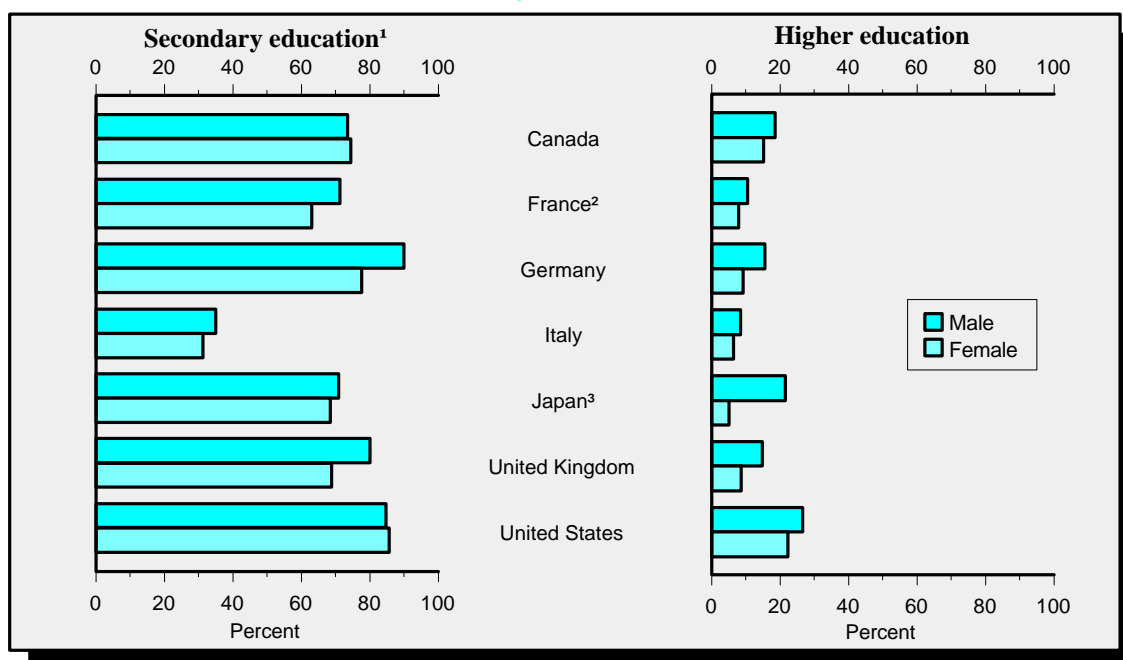
SOURCE: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, INES Project, International Indicators Project.

Percentage of the population in large industrialized countries who completed secondary and higher education, by age, sex, and country: 1994

25–34 years old



25–64 years old



¹ Includes individuals who have at least completed secondary education.

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SOURCE: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, INES Project, International Indicators Project.

Table 23-1 Percentage of the population who had completed secondary and higher education, by sex, country, and age: 1994

Country	Total		Male		Female	
	Secondary education ¹	Higher education	Secondary education ¹	Higher education	Secondary education ¹	Higher education
25-64 years old						
Large countries						
Canada	74.1	16.9	73.6	18.5	74.5	15.2
France ²	67.1	9.2	71.3	10.6	63.0	7.9
Germany	84.0	12.6	90.0	15.7	77.7	9.3
Italy	33.2	7.5	35.0	8.5	31.4	6.5
Japan ³	69.7	13.3	70.9	21.5	68.5	5.2
United Kingdom	74.5	11.7	80.1	14.8	68.9	8.6
United States	85.1	24.4	84.7	26.7	85.6	22.3
Other countries						
Australia	50.2	13.4	60.1	14.2	40.3	12.6
Austria	68.1	5.6	75.4	7.2	60.7	4.1
Belgium	49.4	10.1	50.8	13.0	47.9	7.2
Denmark	60.0	13.7	64.1	14.2	55.8	13.1
Finland	63.6	10.9	62.8	12.5	64.4	9.2
Greece	44.5	12.1	46.5	13.6	42.6	10.6
Ireland	45.2	8.8	41.7	10.2	48.7	7.4
Netherlands	59.8	21.4	65.3	24.5	54.2	18.2
New Zealand	57.3	9.2	62.9	10.7	51.8	7.8
Norway	80.7	16.4	81.2	17.2	80.2	15.5
Portugal	19.1	7.2	18.8	7.8	19.4	6.7
Spain	26.2	11.0	28.6	11.2	23.9	10.8
Sweden	72.3	12.2	70.7	12.6	73.9	11.9
Switzerland	82.2	8.4	88.8	11.6	75.6	5.2
Turkey	19.8	7.0	22.2	8.2	16.2	5.3
25-34 years old						
Large countries						
Canada	82.3	18.4	80.6	18.0	84.0	18.9
France ²	84.4	11.6	86.4	11.9	82.3	11.3
Germany	89.6	11.9	91.6	12.7	87.5	11.0
Italy	47.3	7.9	45.6	7.7	49.0	8.1
Japan ³	90.6	22.9	89.3	34.2	91.8	11.5
United Kingdom	86.1	13.7	87.3	15.7	84.9	11.7
United States	86.4	23.4	85.2	23.4	87.5	23.5
Other countries						
Australia	54.3	14.7	61.8	13.9	46.9	15.6
Austria	79.3	6.3	82.6	7.0	75.8	5.6
Belgium	65.2	13.5	63.4	15.3	67.2	11.6
Denmark	67.9	13.6	68.1	13.1	67.6	14.2
Finland	81.9	11.8	79.3	12.7	84.7	10.8
Greece	62.5	15.3	62.2	14.6	62.7	16.0
Ireland	61.4	10.8	55.9	10.9	66.7	10.6
Netherlands	69.4	23.9	69.1	25.0	69.7	22.9
New Zealand	61.5	9.9	65.5	10.6	57.8	9.3
Norway	88.9	18.2	87.5	16.6	90.3	19.9
Portugal	30.2	9.6	25.9	8.1	34.1	11.0
Spain	45.3	17.1	44.0	14.8	46.6	19.3
Sweden	84.6	9.7	83.4	9.5	85.9	9.9
Switzerland	88.7	8.9	92.1	11.4	85.1	6.4
Turkey	23.6	6.6	27.2	7.5	19.5	5.6

Table 23-1 Percentage of the population who had completed secondary and higher education, by sex, country, and age: 1994 - Continued

Country	Total		Male		Female	
	Secondary education ¹	Higher education	Secondary education ¹	Higher education	Secondary education ¹	Higher education
35-44 years old						
Large countries						
Canada	79.2	18.2	77.8	19.2	80.6	17.2
France ²	72.8	9.7	77.2	11.1	68.4	8.4
Germany	88.2	16.4	91.9	19.5	84.4	13.2
Italy	41.0	10.3	43.0	11.3	38.9	9.2
Japan ³	77.0	14.5	77.0	23.6	77.0	5.4
United Kingdom	78.5	13.8	83.9	17.0	73.1	10.7
United States	88.7	27.0	88.4	29.1	89.1	25.0
Other countries						
Australia	53.5	16.4	65.1	17.9	42.1	14.9
Austria	72.0	7.2	78.9	8.9	64.7	5.4
Belgium	53.6	11.1	54.1	14.1	53.0	8.1
Denmark	61.7	16.3	65.8	16.2	57.3	16.4
Finland	72.1	12.8	70.6	14.0	73.7	11.7
Greece	49.9	14.6	51.6	16.6	48.3	12.6
Ireland	47.5	9.8	44.0	11.6	50.9	8.0
Netherlands	63.7	24.5	68.7	27.8	58.6	21.2
New Zealand	60.0	11.4	65.7	13.6	54.6	9.3
Norway	84.7	20.0	84.3	20.8	85.0	19.2
Portugal	22.3	9.5	22.6	10.2	22.1	8.9
Spain	29.3	12.6	32.4	12.6	26.2	12.7
Sweden	77.9	14.4	75.0	14.9	80.9	13.9
Switzerland	84.5	10.0	89.2	13.3	79.4	6.6
Turkey	19.7	8.0	23.1	9.3	14.7	5.9
45-54 years old						
Large countries						
Canada	70.1	17.4	70.9	21.1	69.4	13.7
France ²	60.3	9.2	65.2	11.3	55.4	7.0
Germany	83.7	13.2	90.5	18.0	76.6	8.3
Italy	25.6	7.1	29.5	8.7	21.8	5.6
Japan ³	59.6	9.1	62.4	15.8	56.9	2.5
United Kingdom	69.1	10.6	77.2	14.7	61.1	6.5
United States	85.1	26.2	85.1	30.3	85.1	22.1
Other countries						
Australia	47.3	12.2	58.0	13.7	36.2	10.6
Austria	63.7	5.1	72.6	7.4	54.7	2.8
Belgium	42.9	8.9	45.8	12.5	39.9	5.3
Denmark	59.3	13.6	64.2	15.3	54.2	11.9
Finland	55.9	11.5	55.5	14.1	56.4	8.9
Greece	34.6	10.2	39.0	12.9	30.3	7.5
Ireland	35.2	7.5	32.8	9.7	37.6	5.3
Netherlands	53.9	19.4	62.5	23.9	45.0	14.8
New Zealand	55.8	8.8	62.4	10.9	49.1	6.7
Norway	77.8	14.8	79.0	17.3	76.6	12.1
Portugal	14.7	6.3	15.9	8.0	13.7	4.7
Spain	16.0	8.0	20.5	10.2	11.7	6.0
Sweden	68.6	14.7	66.3	15.1	71.0	14.2
Switzerland	79.3	7.9	87.8	11.3	70.8	4.5
Turkey	16.3	8.0	18.4	9.7	12.4	4.8

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